

## **MINUTES**

**Present:** Robert Sword (RS) – Chair, Dave Evans (DE), Cllr Phil Kershaw (PK), Stephen Parker (SP), Robert Peacock (RP), Cllr Subash Sharma (SS), Julia Clark (JC), Asher Haynes (AH), Karl Gerhardsen (KG)\*

### **In attendance**

Sharon Graves (SG) - Administrator and Company Secretary  
Paul Thompson (PT) – Community Woodland Manager

### **Action**

1. **Apologies:** Ian Horton (IH)  
\*KG did join meeting but unable to connect via audio

2. **Declarations of Interest:** None

3. **Minutes**

### **Minutes of meeting on 16 February 2021**

The minutes of the meeting on 16 February 2021 were **AGREED** as a true record.

#### ***(i) Matters Arising not on the Agenda***

- a) Company Credit Card – Still outstanding and agreed to start process and email Board with a final recommendation and decision. **RP/DE**
- b) Frequency of Board Meetings – The Board are in general agreement to extend the interval between Board Meetings. In the meantime, the Focus Group need to draw up Terms of Reference as a formal Executive Committee. **RP/DE/PT**
- c) Membership Database – Mailchimp database not reconciling with excel spreadsheets and a need of review of Comms with a view to differentiating between members and subscribers to put forward at AGM. RP to liaise with Mel at CAVCA on how to proceed. **RP**
- d) Licenses and Permits – PT to send RS a draft. **PT**

#### ***(ii) Confirmation of Confidential items***

The Board agreed that Item 4(i) Governance remains confidential on the last minutes. The full minutes will now be posted on the website.

## **4. Governance**

### ***(i) Board Member Resignation***

KG wishes to resign at AGM. One Member nomination available and JC agreed to be nominated. Nomination forms to be sent to SP and JC. **SG**

### ***(i) AGM***

AGM date agreed on Wednesday 23 June at 6.30 pm at Woodend.

## 5. Financial update

### (i) Financial Statements

SG reported as follows:

The current overall balance is £45,757.81 as at 23 March 2021:

- *Wild About the Woods* - The closing balance is £359.39 - virtual office costs/room hire costs are being allocated to this fund.
- *Unrestricted funds* - The closing balance is £25,453.16, including the receipt of a grant of £4k for Forge Valley Tree Safety Work
- *Power to Change* – The closing balance is £11,945.26. Spend of note includes salary expenditure, final payments of tractor and trailer. Income received; £15k drawdown from Power to Change.
- *Power to Change* Business Plan and Comms – Grant monies received of £8k.
- DE informed Board that there may be monies within £8k for training.
- RP raised his disappointment with CAVCA re Comms and has received very little engagement from CAVCA. PT to meet with CAVCA on 31 March to discuss Comms and will raise this. RS will contact Mel in order to get more clarity on Comms strategy and PT to emphasise at the meeting. JC mentioned this is her area of expertise and is available to assist.

RS/PT

### (ii) CapEx and new equipment update

PT reported as follows:

- Small scale purchasing of tools in respect of tree safety work has proven to be a good investment.
- Timber harvesting – In February external contractors successfully felled 20 tonnes of beech from compartment 8f. NYMNP 'Woodland Restoration Team' were welcomed to RWCE as an opportunity for recent apprentice graduates to hone their skills by assisting RWCE thin compartment 9c. PT has now forwarded 80 tonnes of hardwood to the sawmill site ready for haulage to buyers (Flixton Sawmill, Snainton Woodworking and private buyers).
- Tractor/trailer has more than proved its worth since purchased.
- Capital expenditure funds; £5k – £6k still required to set up office.

### (iii) Accounts year ended 2019/2020

RS reported as follows:

- Draft accounts had been issued to relevant Board Members and no comments received from Board Members. The Board agreed to sign off the year end accounts (2019/2020) and agreed capacity to continue as a going concern.
- Accountant will send suggested wording for Letter of Representation and RS will sign.

RS  
RS

## 6. Funding

### *(i) Power to Change Update*

The following was noted:

- Second drawdown of £15k received into bank. Two more drawdowns of £15k for 2022 then no more funds available.
- HT CCS funds will not be received until later in 2021.
- Power To Change additional funding of £20k currently applied for - £10k for car park, £3k for digital communications and £7k for core funds. If successful timescale will be around 3 months.

RS

### *(ii) RWCE Fundraising Working Group*

Nothing to report.

### *(iii) Other Fundraising*

The following was noted:

- Need to establish what funds need to be raised in order of priority.
- Fundraising Working Group needs to be established.
- SS maintained that SBC Councillors have been awarded £2k each for their respective Wards. Big push on planting oak trees to commemorate COVID-19 and connecting people. Why not Raincliffe Woods? PT also raised that RWCE have established oaks in the woods that can also be used to commemorate. SS suggested exploring all opportunities. DE pointed out that we could do both.
- PT - Kickstart Scheme grant application has been successful for x1 paid role to start in August during RWCE busy months. Funding to cover 100% of National Minimum Wage, plus NI contributions, plus minimum automatic pension contributions. Requested that a contract of employment is prepared. When needed to contact Alcumus who will draft a staff contract.

RP/DE/JC

PT/SS

PT

## 7. Community Woodland Manager/Business Plan Focus Group

### *(i) Woodland Management update*

PT report was discussed and the following was noted:

- Volunteering - Cautious return to volunteering, starting with clearing and restocking Peter's Gate area with native wet woodland species which has drastically improved the visual impact of the site from the highway. Volunteers also helped to clear the Forge Valley meadow of the large fallen ash tree on Thursday 11th March.
- Waste management - Due to the condition of the Middle Track, the council waste collectors have been unable to empty the bins. Members of the public have been leaving waste on the floor next to the bin instead of taking litter home with them.

- Car park signage - PT has now obtained three quotes for the design and production of car park interpretation boards. Content has been drafted. PT
- Income streams - Firewood product (log nets) are now ready for sale. Awaiting response from local retailers. PT

**(ii) Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship Scheme**

The following was noted:

- Government scheme on website. SSI consents – liaising with Natural England. Once given rural payments will then be live on website. June is window for capital work done. Outstanding boundary change to be done.

**(iii) Community Engagement Update**

The following was noted:

- RWCE spring newsletter was published on 12/03/21. Feedback questionnaire has been published through the latest Newsletter. Everyone is encouraged to complete this questionnaire and get as many people to complete. ALL
- Recent work in Forge Valley stimulated interest on social media via Facebook – 5,000 views.

**(iv) Infrastructure/Resources update**

The following was noted:

- RP reported that closed car parks were used as temporary campsites and need to address security. Situation has been reported to local Police who were actively patrolling.

**8. Boardwalk Project**

The following was noted:

- A bid has been submitted to Highways England for a much reduced project. RP
- Bid to Green Heritage Fund – SBC internal and progressed to second stage. RP

**9. Business Plan Review update**

The following was noted:

- Timescale for completion of the Business Plan is prior to June and to be available for AGM on 23 June.

## 10. Publicity, marketing and PR

### *(i) Social Media*

The following was noted:

- Facebook – 651 likes, 688 followers (Feb - 642)
- Instagram – 141 (Feb -112)
- JC – Increase social media, ie. Own a day, eg. International/Yorkshire day of forest. Work with PT and Group regarding digital strategy. Start with Scarborough then the wider community. JC will report back at next meeting.

JC

### *(ii) Photo Competition*

The following was noted:

- Posters posted in the car parks have been well received.
- 10 entries received for the photo competition. Discussion of getting a local professional photographer to judge. Few names were suggested (Kane Cunningham – AH, Alan Hurst – RS, Jo Cornish – DE).

PT

**Robert Peacock left the meeting – 7.35pm**

## 11. Health and Safety

### *(i) Seavegate – tree safety inspection update*

Tree safety work along Seavegate highway. Thanks to support from Councillor SS and PK RWCE awarded a grant of £4,000 from SBC towards the Seavegate tree safety work. The road closure has been secured with Highways, consent secured from Natural England and support/resources (staff, vehicles and tools) secured from BT Openreach and North York Moors National Park Authority to complete the programme of work. Work has now been completed and SS/PK asked to report back to SBC that monies were well received and the positive feedback. Useful experience gained on how we can deal with this in the future. Paul Thompson was interviewed by 'This Is The Coast' radio station on 12/03/21 for broadcast to promote the road closure and the work of RWCE.

### *(ii) Forge Valley Tree Report*

Dealt with in (i) above.

### *(iii) Health & Safety Update*

The following was noted:

- A concern was recently raised with the Health & Safety Executive regarding standards of health, safety and welfare at RWCE in respect of timber stacked in a way which might cause risk to the public. This was rectified by the contractor within 48 hours and HSE were satisfied with the outcome.



- H&S - Complaint made regarding rutting and Boardwalk around Throxenby Mere. Responsibility for the work by SBC and has been put on hold due to COVID-19. Alan Tomlinson advised as soon as restrictions are lifted work will take priority – still awaiting. PK to feedback to SBC. PT reported that during the winter it has been so wet that any work done would only make it worse. During March it has dried out but due other work commitments unable to work on this but will make it a priority.
- A section of the Forge Valley boardwalk has slumped due to eroding riverbank. PT visited the site with David Smith (NYMNP Ranger) and have made a proposal to Craig Ralston of Natural England for an emergency diversion. Still awaiting response from NE. This is a big concern.

PK/PT

## 12. Any Other Business

The following was noted:

- Anti-social behaviour reports - Reports of individuals building illegal mountain bike trails that have impacted an active badger sett. IH and AH have liaised with the individual and plan to remove the trail in the coming weeks. PT has reported the badger sett disturbance to 101 Wildlife Crime Officer and East Yorkshire Badger Protection Group. AH reported that he will visit woods regularly in evenings.

AH

## 13. Dates of next meetings

The following **changed** dates to be noted in diaries:

- 11 May 2021 – RWCE Board Meeting
- 23 June 2021 – AGM @ 6.30 pm (Venue to be confirmed)

Dates below are **original** dates and will be reviewed

- *August meeting to be determined if needed.*
- 7 September 2021
- 12 October 2021
- 16 November 2021

*All members of the Board are bound by the principle of Collective Responsibility. This means that whilst Board members are at liberty to express their individual points of view at Board meetings, and are encouraged to engage in full and frank discussion, once a matter has been agreed, that decision is then owned by the Board. All Board members should present a united front outside of the meetings taking collective responsibility for that decision whether they personally agreed with it or not. Board members should not share with people outside of the Board the views expressed by individual Board members in discussions, or how they voted. Only the decision should be shared as recorded in the minutes.*